

The Library Assistant :

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EDITORIALS.

Library Association Council Election, 1922.—Members of the L.A.A. who are also members of the Library Association are urged to vote, without fail, for the following candidates, and to endeavour to improve upon the great successes of past years.

For the London Council :—

J. FREDERICK HOGG, Battersea Public Libraries.

B. M. HEADICAR, London School of Economics.

GURNER P. JONES, Stepney Public Libraries, Hon. Secretary, L.A.A.

WM. BENSON THORNE, Poplar Public Libraries.

For the Country Council :—

W. A. BRISCOE, Nottingham Public Libraries.

MISS M. GILBERT, Chiswick Public Library.

GEORGE E. ROEBUCK, Walthamstow Public Libraries.

W. C. BERWICK SAYERS, Croydon Public Libraries.

HENRY A. SHARP, Croydon Public Libraries, Hon. Editor, "Library Assistant."

H. TAPLEY SOPER, Exeter Public Library.

G. A. STEPHEN, Norwich Public Library.

Sequels.—We have pleasure in announcing that the "Sequels" volume is now practically ready, and that copies may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary at six shillings each, post free. May we again ask our readers to make the publication widely known, not only because the Benevolent Fund of the Association will benefit, but also because it really is a valuable and much needed guide for librarians and their readers.

Our Next Issue.—The next number of *The Library Assistant* will appear on 1st September. In the meantime, we hope that our readers will have had an enjoyable and profitable holiday, not forgetting that any missionary work they may be able to accomplish for the Association will be mutually helpful to ourselves and to our more isolated colleagues.

The New Officers.—We cannot allow this number to appear without offering a word of most cordial welcome to our new President, Mr. E. C. Wickens, to our Vice-President, Mr. W. H. Parker, and to our Honorary Treasurer, Mr. R. Cooper. All of these men are—and have been for long—keenly interested in the welfare of assistants, and have already served the Council for a considerable number of years faithfully and well, so that we have no hesitation whatever in saying that our affairs can be placed in their hands with complete confidence. We wish them a very successful and prosperous term of office.

Next Easter in Paris.—It was a matter for regret that the contemplated visit to Holland at Whitsuntide had to be abandoned owing to lack of support. Perhaps when things become more settled it will be possible to revive the project with reasonable chance of its success. It is proposed that next Easter we shall pay a visit to Paris from Thursday to Tuesday, and we are sure that the idea will commend itself to our readers. It should be definitely understood, however, that the object of the visit is, primarily, to visit libraries, and not merely to see Paris, although ample opportunities will no doubt be provided for doing this. We shall be very happy to hear from any to whom the suggestion commends itself, and if there is a sufficient demand, it may be possible to arrange for those who so desire, to lay by each month a small sum of money towards the expenses.

The Woman Librarian.—We wish to place on record our entire disapproval of the current view on "The Woman Librarian," contained in the L.A.R. for June. Of course, *F. B.* is entitled to hold whatever views he likes on women in libraries and on the School of Librarianship, and he can obtrude them as and when the opportunity may present itself, but as a Fellow of the Library Association we contend that he ought not to be allowed to obtrude them in the official journal of the Association, which Association is open equally to women as well as to men. We may hold similar views ourselves, but we should never dream of putting them forward in this journal, and if we did, the Council would not permit us to. Perhaps the Publications Committee of the L.A. will want to know why the view was published. Anyhow, we suggest seriously that the *Record* owes an apology to its women members.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.*

By EDWIN C. WICKENS, *Liverpool Public Libraries.*

It is the privilege, if not the duty, of an incoming President, to examine as minutely and as accurately as possible, the position of the profession to which he belongs—to discuss any question which he considers of outstanding importance—to solve (or attempt to solve) any difficulty which stands in the way of success.

That is to say, if this address is to be of any value—it must in some way be vital: it must touch (or attempt to touch) the heart of our professional problems.

And I would suggest to you at the outset—that there is a problem: a vital and all important problem: a problem which has lain dormant, almost unrecognized, certainly almost unattacked, for too long.

In a word: *The position of our profession is lamentably unsatisfactory.* Unsatisfactory, I mean, in public estimation. And this, surely, is true: the Public, the great mass of thinking men and women, is unaware, to-day, of the tremendous educational potentiality of the Public Library idea.

And there is a subsidiary thought to which I must give expression now: a thought which has some bearing upon something that I wish to emphasize later: *70 years have elapsed since the institution of the public library idea—and the public is still ignorant of its possible greatness.*

Therefore, does it not follow: that the lack of income, which lies almost at the root of our comparative lack of efficiency, and prevents us from developing and proving the greatness of the Public Library idea, is due, and due only, to the serious lack of understanding on the part of the public?

And if all this is true—if the failure to understand is true: if the great general thinking public is unaware of the possible ideal which is enwrapped within the term "Public Library"—an ideal held at least partially by Mr. Ewart and by the other originators of our profession—and if we have failed to teach its true meaning—then the fault lies not with the public, but with us!

The question which I want to discuss is, in reality, threefold:

- (1) What, exactly, is the position of the Public Library in the estimation of the Public?
- (2) If the position falls below that which it should occupy, how may it be rectified?
- (3) What part must this Association play in the rectification?

In order to estimate accurately the present position of the Public Library, we must have in our minds an accurate estimate of its ideal: *i.e.*, we must have a fairly clear idea of the position it *should* occupy.

* Delivered at the London Day Training College, 28th June, 1922.

You will remember that Mr. Ewart, in introducing the original Public Library Bill in the House of Commons in 1850, said plainly :

"All evidence tended to prove that the labouring population would be *far more advanced* if they had such opportunities as were afforded by means of Public Libraries . . ."

Have we realized that? The Public Library to be an amazing regenerative power in the life of the working class : an irresistible educational impulse which would tend to solve and sweep away ignorance !

That, as I suggested before, was Mr. Ewart's ideal—but which, to-day, is only a very small portion of a much larger ideal.

Mr. Ewart spoke only of the working class—those I presume for whom Mechanics' Institutes were created ! But to-day we include in our ideal all but the highest : all but the richest I mean—all classes, except the comparative few who can purchase or borrow expensively the books they require.

May I restate a truism? Except for the comparative few to whom I have referred—except, too, in part, for those who are privileged to use for a time a University Library—except for these—there is no method by which the generality of the public can obtain satisfactorily a continuous education—except through the Public Library.

And what does this mean? Is it possible to summarize in exact English this amazing and apparently impossible position? That an enormous preponderance of students of theology and religion, of science and sociology, of fine arts and literature, of geography and history—of every section and subsection of knowledge—of every imaginable and unimaginable subject under the sun, must rely and rely only on the Public Library for their continuous study. And not the student only—but for the student in embryo : that half-conscious mind which gropes dimly and unsystematically into all kinds of subjects—with a barely conscious longing and probing after knowledge : for the desultory reader : for readers of fiction and students of fact—for all readers indeed—the Public Library is the only institution which can cater for their needs.

And if the Public Library is to cater for this multitude, what should be its provision?

But before replying to my own question, I must make one observation which is suggested by the preceding statement. There do exist libraries other than Public Libraries : playing comparatively an unimportant part—but existent—catering for a few : private and semi-private libraries, collections of books—more or less available for students, but which would render an infinitely greater service if co-ordinated and linked together. At the moment, in the same city—in the same district : purchasing the

same books—disconnected and wasteful! Libraries which, if linked up with the Public Library, purchasing not the same but other expensive works on the same subject—co-operating, interchanging, working in harmony: a combined catalogue for the whole—welding into one theoretical unit, within one city, one district (or nationally if you like), the resources of all—would solve, at least in part, the difficulty of income in so far as it affects the purchase of books.

But that is by the way: in spite of these Libraries—what I said before is true: The Public Library is the only institution capable of catering for the generality of the public.

What, then, should be the theoretical provision for the generality of the public to which I have referred? The ideal provision I mean! Unhampered by a suicidal economy: an open-handed provision of the essential!

The answer, of necessity, is **BOOKS!!**

Not a mere handful per annum: a selection, which must exclude what should be essential. Not, at the most, a few on a big subject—and none at all on subjects of lesser importance. But a plentiful supply: regardless, or almost regardless, of super-economy: a floodtide of literature: a continuous stream of new books, of new editions, of replacements: the total elimination of the out-of-date and the dirty—a clean sweep of the present inadequate idea. Classified, of course: catalogued minutely, of course: open-accessed in well lit, well ventilated, well arranged rooms, of course! With a well paid—and *well educated staff!*

Will you pardon me if I lay emphasis on the last named: its value to the profession is inadequately understood: once we can prove that the profession as a whole is well-educated—the well-paid will follow!

But, first of all—**BOOKS!** In such quality and quantity, or in such superfluity indeed, that readers of all classes will be drawn irresistibly—for drawn irresistibly they would be; and success would be unprecedented; and the Public Library would assume the position its potentiality demands.

Let me anticipate an objection! Is it quite certain that the public appreciates and utilizes the facilities already provided? Is there a clear justification for this enormously increased provision which I have suggested? It is unquestionably true that the public does not utilize the present provision to the full! Even with the present provision the inherent opportunities of the libraries are not utilized completely!

But to what extent is this true? In answering that question I refer to libraries from which barriers are removed: to libraries which are classified and guided: libraries wherein the public may

search and choose for themselves : the open-access libraries alone : the remainder cannot be included in my conclusion !

And while I hold to the statement I have already expressed that the facilities provided are not utilized to the full, at the same time it is also true, that where Public Libraries have been able to revise, increase, and open-access their stocks, the increase in issue has been in proportion to the increase in income provided : the sweeping away of barriers and the increased provision of books have jointly led to an enormously increased utility !

And yet the public lack understanding : they accept the facilities and the partial provision : they appreciate in part but mainly with apathy. They do not insistently demand an increased provision : there is no cry for more : no expressed willingness to pay : in a word, they accept, but they fail to understand and appreciate the possible greatness of the Public Library ideal.

What then, exactly, is the position of the Public Library in the estimation of the public? We have seen the possible public for whom we may cater : we have seen the possible provision and its probable effect. On the one hand, an immense clientèle in embryo—students and readers without number—an amazing educational opportunity. On the other : an ideal provision of books : classified, catalogued, open-accessed : which, without question, would prove irresistibly attractive.

And the public apathetic and only slightly appreciative !

And Mr. Cope Cornford and the *Spectator* ;

And Tunbridge Wells and Chesterfield ;

And the Marylebone Borough Council ;

And the " Report on the Teaching of English " !

Do these in any way reflect the position of the Public Library in the estimation of the public?

With the isolated critics like Mr. Cope Cornford, the contributor to the *Spectator*, and others, I have nothing to do at the moment !

But the " Report on the Teaching of English " is serious : it bears the stamp of the Board of Education : it is the matured result of a wide and careful enquiry by a carefully constituted committee. *And it is condemnatory in its tone!* May I emphasize the fact that the Department responsible for its issue is the Department which is responsible for our national education ; and this evening I have been urging that the Public Library is the only educational institution which can possibly cater for the generality of the public : for the students in the arts and the sciences, the humanities and social science—students in embryo—and not only in English—and readers of all classes : an amazing and incomprehensible army !

Listen to the three following paragraphs:—

- (1) "The hopefulness of the generation which first established free libraries has been succeeded by some natural regrettable despondency because municipal libraries too often reflect the low literary standards of the communities in which they are established."
- (2) "The official librarian's besetting temptation is to become a custodian rather than a distributor of books. . . . He requires wide knowledge of books, sympathies with many tastes and needs, a readiness to learn and a willingness to serve."
- (3) "The closer the connection between education and the public library, the more likely we are to secure a larger number of enlightened librarians who understand not only complicated systems of cataloguing, but also the insides of the books which they handle."

Is there any truth in it? Is there any suggestion of truth? Do "municipal libraries often reflect the low literary standards of the communities in which they are established"?

Are librarians and assistants mere custodians (or for that matter mere distributors) of books?

Have we, as a profession, over-emphasized the technical training and neglected education and culture?

It is useless merely to dismiss the suggestions with a chorus of "NO's." Is there, or is there not, the slightest semblance of truth in the undercurrent charges? Let us look the matter fairly and squarely in the face!

(1) The stocks of municipal libraries *are* frequently lamentable; out-of-date, dirty, and inadequate, but they reflect—not "the low literary standards of the communities in which they are established," or, for that matter, the low literary standard of the librarian in charge, *but they reflect the incomes which the said communities* have provided for the purchase and renewal of stocks.

(2) Are we merely custodians (or distributors) of books? I say emphatically, No! Speaking of my own colleagues, and those librarians and assistants whom I know intimately, I say definitely, it is untrue! I know of no profession in which the members are more willing to serve and ready to learn; and (incidentally) I know of no profession which is called upon to exercise a wider general knowledge than the profession to which you and I belong.

(3) Have we under-estimated the importance of general education and insisted too much on the technical? Here I am not sure! You will remember I emphasized the need for a well-educated staff at an earlier stage of this address. Some of you will also remember that in January, 1911—at a meeting of this Association at Islington—in a paper on the "Future of Librarianship," I uttered a warning on much the same lines. Will you forgive me if I quote two very brief extracts:—

"And taking for granted the presence of the qualities I have indicated, the next thing essential is 'Education.' And mark: not only technical education! Here again you must

not misunderstand my position : I do not for a moment deprecate the value of technical training—no one has a clearer idea of its necessity; *but technical training in itself can never have any evolutionary effect on the future of our profession.*”

“Consequently, when I endeavour to picture what I conceive to be the future librarian; and when I endeavour to trace in the sands of the future, the position our profession will occupy, I am constrained to believe it must be built on a wider basis of personal education than is at present accepted.”

Again you must not misunderstand me! I am not suggesting that the stricture suggested, rather than expressed, in the “Report on the Teaching of English” is destructively and undeniably accurate. But is there a suggestion of truth in it? Have we as a profession neglected to encourage, or even to insist upon, the higher education of assistants? General education is essential: it is the one royal road to personal and professional success; and I should like to say emphatically to those who are young in the profession: the future will insist upon education to an extent that we cannot realize to-day! Matriculate if you can; but in any case READ—search out every avenue of literature, and READ—saturate your mind with great thoughts, great phrases, great and wonderful words: gather knowledge—and establish your mind—it is the great highroad to life as well as to librarianship!

But, in any case, true or untrue, does the “Report on the Teaching of English,” or do the isolated strictures of “Litterateurs,” the action of Tunbridge Wells and Chesterfield, and the inaction of the Marylebone Borough Council,—indicate at all accurately the public’s estimate of the public library? To some degree they must! We have already seen that the general public is apathetic and does not understand: individually appreciative, but collectively apathetic! Therefore may we not conclude: the Public Library ideal is still in the germ: still groping in the chrysalis stage of undevelopment: dwelling in the apathy of the public because it has lived for nearly 70 years in the apathy of the profession. It is true there is a sign of an awakening: there is an effort to utilise publicity: a movement at least! But the great fact remains: the main position of the profession is unsatisfactory and demands insistent attention.

And now let me point out a difficulty: a difficulty indeed which really constitutes our problem!

On the one hand we have an ideal: A library wherein the public will attain all (or the greater part of) the books they require. On the other, an apathetic public unwilling to grant the income

essential: apathetic because unconvinced. And, we cannot *prove* our possible greatness without books; without eliminating our barriers and open-accessing our libraries: without revising and revolutionising our stocks: in a word: without income. Then how shall we convert and revolutionise our public? We have in our hands a theory, which in some slight degree has been proved: How is it possible to drive home this Theory, this Ideal?

Certainly, not only (or not merely) by trying to drive the public, by posters, by cinemas, by any means, to utilise our present inadequate stocks! There is, I admit, just a possibility, that if we could drive (or inveigle) in the right people: the people with power—and open to conviction: they might realise, and endeavour to rectify, the wrong.

But the real answer to the problem is more difficult than that: it must not be simply a conversion by units—the matter is too urgent—it must be a conversion “*en masse*”! The great general public must be made to understand not merely that we exist, not merely that we have inadequate stocks,—but that we possess that great inexpressible educational potentiality to which I referred at the outset. And there is the problem: how is it possible to convert the apathetic?

I am afraid I shall have to talk about means you have heard of before: ancient and hackneyed, devoid of much meaning because of much repetition. But, at least, I will try to clothe them in new words—perhaps with greater meaning—perhaps, too, with new force. In any case they result from my personal conviction and I see no reason or necessity to manufacture others.

Let us commence with a national ideal, even as we conceived a local ideal. Nationally, what should be the position of the public library? What is our estimate of its position?

(1) *The Literary Centre of Every Locality!* The centre around which will naturally radiate every matter relating to books: to all intellectual and commercial matters; to questions relating to industry, to education, to all matters relating to students, to students in embryo, to students of fact and readers of fiction—but conceived as a great and indispensable national institution—the one possible national institution of potential educational greatness: conceived as such professionally, and preached as such, with all the genius and energy the profession can supply. Let me differentiate emphatically between the spasmodic local efforts of a few; and a great national effort to assert the educational position of the public library! It is possible, I know, for a few, blessed with special capacity and genius, to assert themselves locally: to obtain a portion and even a substantial portion of the income they require; and to prove, as a

few have unquestionably proved, the immeasurable elasticity of the public library ideal: an increased income enabling them to remove the barriers, and improve their stock, and increase their work by an appreciable percentage.

But local effort, even when successful, will not suffice: it must be a national campaign!

The literary centre of every locality: the educational centre as far as books are concerned—not attempting, of course, to usurp the teaching capacity of the University—but, as far as reading is concerned: the centre of the literary and educational life of the community. Is it possible for the public library to gather round itself this literary and educational halo? To envelop the term “public library” with a reputation synonymous with literature and learning and culture, and every matter relative to systematic and unsystematic education? Can the public library remove the reproach that it is but the distributor of books: a source of semi-haphazard supply—without any capacity to teach? The “Report on the Teaching of English” says: “‘Books cannot teach the use of books,’ and even the provision of good books does not ensure that good use will be made of them.” That is a reproach which ought to be removed! The supply, the plentiful supply, of good books is good: an indispensable adjunct to the modern life of the community—but if the ability to teach the knowledge of good books can be added—how immeasurably superior the work of the public library would be! At the moment, what national or local institution is there which systematically, of set purpose, occupies itself with teaching the contents of books—with teaching the art of reading, with appreciating the nobility of great words, of great phrases, of great thoughts? There is no such institution! Literary Societies, detached and unimportant: inconclusive in their methods, inefficient and unsystematic in the main,—touch the outer fringe of the problem—but no great national or local institution, responsible for the most important element of national education, exists! Is it not possible for the public library to become this national and local institution: *to assume the professorship of reading*—to carry the message of great books into the life of the people: then, and only then, collections of books would indeed become the true University of the nation!

That, you will admit, is a national problem: a problem to be considered with all the genius and energy of our profession—and a problem which is far more practicable than appears on the surface.

(2) *Then the Advocacy of Our Ideals!* Silence, at least, will not advance the cause of the Public Library, nor increase our income: silence has failed to achieve in the past and will continuously fail in the future. My preceding paragraph suggests,

if it does not outwardly advocate, the formation of educational societies, literary societies, or any societies or methods indeed which can achieve the professorship of reading. But what of the press?—of the printed page, I mean—not merely the utilisation of the orthodox: not merely the issue of an occasional article in the press: in the daily paper, the monthly or quarterly review. Is there no genius or capacity within the profession capable of organising and sustaining a campaign to achieve our ideals? Or have we no belief in our ideal? Have we no faith in the educational volition of the Public Library? Shall we accept the contemptible position of “custodian” or “distributor”?

Or, on the other hand, if we have sufficiently the fire of enthusiasm, cannot we utilise the means by which politicians achieve their desired education of the people and not politicians only: enthusiasts for all causes: educational, political, social, commercial, religious ideals have been advocated and achieved by means of the press: by leaflet, by pamphlet, by books: in addition to the orthodox appeal of the daily paper, the monthly and quarterly review.

(3) One must admit that it is difficult to educate the adult: when one has attained mature years, one has assumed the intellectual garb of one's life. It's very maturity may really be immature: incomplete and superficial perhaps: but difficult to disturb, more difficult to improve. The elasticity of the mind has become rigid—less sensitive to light and to learning, and impossibly responsive to culture. *But not so with the child!* Children after all, are immature citizens—being moulded to rule, by education and environment: by BOOKS! I do not suggest that a child may become great merely by reading: but I do say emphatically that there is an infinite, unfathomable greatness in literature: a potential greatness and grandeur which would revolutionise the nation; and a part of which greatness, at least, can be imparted to the child. And cannot the professorship of reading undertake this? To reveal the beauty and harmony of words; to stamp the mind of the child with the amazing greatness and grandeur of great thoughts and great actions; to inculcate the essence of manliness and womanliness, by bringing children into contact with great literature! Not, mark, merely because it might erect a veneer of culture: but because it might and could produce character!

You will not, I hope, charge me with ignorance regarding the existence of lectures to children and young people. They exist: spasmodically and locally: and in the main unsystematically! But I consider it a national problem to be considered by the genius and enthusiasm of the profession: a possible method

of influencing and converting the nation—for its own sake—as well as for the sake of revealing the greatness of the Public Library ideal.

I have mentioned three methods by which the greatness of the Public Library idea might be inculcated: three only, you know of others,—but three will suffice for my purpose. My object this evening is not to exhaust all possible methods of educating the public, but to urge, with all the force and energy I possess, that this question, this essential and all-important question, should be attacked: not spasmodically and lifelessly: but continuously and energetically: attacked persistently: utilising all the genius and capacity which is engendered in the profession.

I have a profound belief in my profession! It will yet be one of the greatest of our national professions: *but it must be made so!* No mere lifeless acceptance of the inadequate will suffice: we must fight, and fight hard, for its efficiency—fight with all our intelligence, genius and capacity: utilise every means to impress and educate the public: utilise the unorthodox: by the national organisation of literary and other societies—by the utilisation of the press—by our campaign among children—by lectures and addresses before Rotary Clubs and all kinds of societies and guilds—by personal reputation—by countless other methods—and, thus, finally, achieve our position and our income; revolutionising our stocks, removing our barriers, increasing our facilities: revealing by all means that potential educational greatness of which I spoke at the outset.

Now, very briefly, in a paragraph: what part can this Association—*must* this Association—play in the contest? And may I point out that we cannot (or most of you cannot) wait for a lead! If there is no lead elsewhere, or if that lead be inadequate, this Association must lead! For the assistant the matter is urgent—more urgent perhaps than for the librarian. The future to a very large extent is the future of the assistant—your future—and you should take an energetic part in its creation.

I wish to say no word that could embarrass the senior Association: its awakening has begun—and if it is unnecessary for this Association to lead—at least it must co-operate—energetically—with a full pressure of membership behind it: it must organize and missionise: draw into its membership all assistants in the Kingdom: by appealing to their professional patriotism, by inspiring them with the professional ideal, by awakening that spirit of professional unity, by which alone a successful national campaign can be achieved.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

The inclemency of the weather and the consequently small attendance notwithstanding, there is no doubt but what the 27th Annual Meeting of the L.A.A., held on the 28th June, at the London Day Training College, will be written down as one of the most pleasant, interesting and important meetings in the annals of the Association.

At the afternoon session we were honoured with the presence of two notable gentlemen, Mr. W. Pett Ridge, the well-known novelist, and Mr. Albert Mansbridge, of world-wide fame, by reason of his work on behalf of Adult Education.

Mr. Mansbridge occupied the chair, and called upon Mr. Pett Ridge to address the meeting on "The London Accent." The speaker made an eloquent plea for the preservation of local dialects, and especially for the one known as the London or cockney accent. Even those who were most favourable towards the preservation of these local dialects oftentimes overlooked the existence of the London accent. The custom of the neighbourhood, the influence of the household, the desire to imitate the largest crowd, and so on, to say nothing of the teaching in the elementary schools, where the whole efforts of the London County Council teachers were devoted to its eradication, all militated against it. It was true that the cockney accent was not limited to the metropolis. Provincial accents were being continually imported. Mr. Pett Ridge remarked on the additions and alterations made to the cockney dialect or accent during the war, on the treatment of the aspirate, on the little differences in the speech found on the south and on the north side of London. He made a most eloquent and convincing plea for the preservation of the London accent, which stimulated observation, sometimes provided a clue that might be otherwise absent, and provided individuality.

Without doubt the most delightful part of an address which sparkled with Mr. Pett Ridge's characteristic humour lay in the many illustrative anecdotes which he narrated in real dialect to the amusement and entertainment of all who listened to him.

The best thanks of the meeting were accorded to Mr. Pett Ridge for his address, and to Mr. Albert Mansbridge for presiding over the meeting. Mr. Mansbridge replied briefly, assuring us of his continued interest in our work wherever he went.

The business meeting was held in the evening at the same place, and was presided over by the retiring President (Mr. J. D. Stewart), supported by the Vice-President (Mr. E. C. Wickens), and the Honorary Secretary (Mr. G. P. Jones). The minutes of the 26th meeting were read and confirmed. The Chairman, in moving the 27th Annual Report, outlined its important features, commented briefly on its successful nature, but urged members to secure a larger membership, if possible a thousand before the next annual meeting came round. The motion for adopting the report was seconded by the Honorary Secretary and carried unanimously.

The retiring Honorary Treasurer (Mr. J. F. Hogg) presented the balance-sheet, which was approved. The announcement of the ballot for the election of Officers and Council was then made, as follows:—

President: Mr. E. C. Wickens, Liverpool Public Libraries.

Vice-President: Mr. W. H. Parker, Hackney Public Libraries.

Honorary Secretary: Mr. Gurner P. Jones, B.A., Stepney Public Libraries.

Honorary Treasurer: Mr. R. Cooper, Battersea Public Libraries.

COUNCIL.

LONDON MEMBERS.

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The incoming President, who received an ovation on taking the chair, expressed his thanks and appreciation for the honour that had been conferred upon him, and delivered the address, which is printed in the present issue.

There was some discussion on the Reconstruction proposals which were submitted to the meeting, the chief criticism centreing in the proposed change in the Association's name, which Mr. Cummins moved should remain as at present. After a good deal of discussion, the motion was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

The Midland Branch recommended the adoption of the term "Division" in lieu of "Branch," and the suggestion was agreed to.

To put the matter in order, it was moved by Mr. Stewart, and resolved, that recommendations 5 (a), (c), (d) and (e), as printed in *The Library Assistant* for June take immediate effect, recommendation (b) to operate at the end of the present official year. Further, that commencing with the new volume the title of the Journal be changed to "The Assistant Librarian: The Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians."

The President presented the retiring Honorary Treasurer, Mr. J. F. Hogg, with a framed certificate conferring upon him the Honorary Fellowship of the Association, and with a clock as a small token of the members' appreciation of his work for the Association over a long period of years, and especially as its Honorary Treasurer during the difficult years of war. Mr. Hogg expressed his thanks in a short speech, in which he referred to the tremendous growth of the Association since the days when he first became a member, and wished it every success in the future.

After Mr. Thorne had expressed the cordial thanks of the meeting to Mr. Wickens for his excellent address and for the admirable way in which he had conducted the business proceedings, the very enjoyable proceedings terminated.

THE BRANCHES.

MIDLAND BRANCH.

The Branch made a novel departure from the usual type of meeting on the 29th March, when the programme was entirely devoted to a visit to the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. During the afternoon the members were

entertained behind the scenes, and in the evening occupied seats in the auditorium. Mr. Bache Matthews, the Business Manager of the Theatre, very closely looked after the members' interests. Mr. Matthews had a worthy lieutenant in Mr. Alan Bland, editor of "The Gong," the literary mouth-piece of the theatre. Our tour included the various workshops and views of the stage and stage properties from every conceivable position. After tea the members attended the performance of "The New Morality," a modern comedy by Harold Chapin. The comedy was preceded by a ballet, "The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep" (Hans Andersen). Both productions were admirably executed, and well exhibited the ability and versatility of the players and management. The meeting was an undoubted success and was attended by forty-two members.

An outcome of this meeting has been the organisation of parties to this theatre to see performances of "Twelfth Night" and "Romeo and Juliet," fifteen members attending on the first occasion and eighteen the second. This activity will be maintained as a still further addition to the subsidiary organisations of the Branch.

The Branch now run, in addition to its ordinary bi-monthly meetings, an educational scheme (49 students were under instruction for the May examinations), monthly rambles (the ninth is held this month), and theatre parties.

NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.

The North-Western Branch (Liverpool and District Division) has made application to the Liverpool Education Committee for the continuance of the winter classes in Librarianship at the Central Technical School, Liverpool.

For many years these classes have formed a vital part of the educational activities of the Liverpool and District Division, and during the coming session, 1922-23, it is hoped that it may be possible to provide courses for Preliminary students as well as for students of Cataloguing and Library Routine.

YORKSHIRE BRANCH.

That well-known institution, the ANNUAL RAMBLE, will take place on Wednesday, July 26th. Members, who will have for their Guide Mr. H. J. M. Maltby (Honorary Secretary of the Bradford Historical and Antiquarian Society) will visit SHIBDEN HALL and COLEY CHURCH. Mr. John Lister, M.A., owner of the Hall, will conduct members over it and explain its history and vicissitudes; and the Vicar of Coley, the Rev. Dr. G. T. Jowett, M.A., will similarly deal with the Church, and show the party the valuable collection of communion plate. Both these gentlemen are of considerable note, locally, as antiquarians, and the Branch is indeed fortunate in securing their ready acquiescence to contribute to the proceedings.

Tea will be arranged at some tea-garden or inn at a charge, it is hoped, of not exceeding 1s. 6d. Further particulars will be issued to members later. As the ground to be covered by the ramble is of more than passing literary interest—Sir Thomas Browne wrote his immortal "Religio Medici" in Shibden Dale, and the Rev. Oliver Heywood, whose "Diary" may rank with other journals, letters and confessions as literature, laboured at Coley—the Committee earnestly hope for a good number present.

WILFRID ROBERTSHAW, *Hon. Sec.*

SOUTH COAST BRANCH.

The quarterly meeting of this Branch was held at the Eastbourne Public Library on Friday, May 5th. Alderman Easter, Chairman of the Library Committee, presided at the tea kindly provided by the Chief Librarian, Mr. J. H. Hardcastle, F.L.A., and extended a very cordial welcome to the visitors. Mr. Hardcastle took the chair later, when two interesting and at times amusing papers were read, one written by Miss M. M. Barnett (Brighton), read by Miss W. Hughes (Brighton), "On nothing in particular," and the other by Mr. Douglas Gardiner (Eastbourne), "The delight of ignorance."

After the reading of the papers a long discussion took place regarding the "Reconstruction Proposals," and the Secretary was appointed delegate to attend the meeting of the Council, &c., in London on May 10th, in order to place the views of the Branch Members before them.

Miss P. Page, of Portsmouth, was awarded the prize of half a guinea offered by Mr. Hutt for the best essay by a senior on "Children's Libraries: Criticisms and Suggestions."

Votes of thanks to the writers of the papers and to Mr. Hardcastle and the Eastbourne Staff were carried unanimously.

ERNEST MALE,
Honorary Secretary, South Coast Branch

APPOINTMENTS.

S. G. BEAGLEY (Richmond), to be third assistant, Portsmouth. Salary £175.

*Miss M. E. DAY, formerly of the League of Nations Library, to be senior assistant, Warrington. Salary £160.

*CHARLES JACKSON (Fulham), to be chief assistant, Sunderland Public Libraries. Salary £225.

* Members, L.A.A.

NEW MEMBERS.

MISS WILLIAMSON (Gainsborough).

Midland Branch: Miss A. D. DAVIES (Wolverhampton).

Associates: Misses M. BROOKS, F. LLOYD, N. G. WILLIAMS (all of Birmingham).

CORRESPONDENCE.

Battersea Public Library,

S.W.11.

1st July, 1922.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—

Kindly allow me a few lines to express my sincere thanks to all the members (many of whom may not have been present) who contributed to the very handsome gifts of which I was the recipient at the Annual Meeting. At such a time one's thoughts desert them, and many things I should have said were scattered to the wind. What I was able to accomplish during my tenure of office was only made possible by the ungrudging support of my colleagues, and the ready response by the members to all my demands.

Those years will always remain the happiest in my memory however long my connection with the Association may last.

Yours sincerely,
J. FREDERICK HOGG,